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From: Mari Guarino <mariachi8@email.com> on 08/17/99 05:47 PM GMT
To: first.lady@Whitehouse.GOV
cc:
Subject: Genetically engineered foods

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Dear Mrs. Clinton,

I need your help. In September 1996, the US harvested its first batch of genetically engineered crops. During the past 30 months, our government has approved more than 40 genetically engineered organisms for commercial distribution impacting over a third of our corn and soybean crops and over 60% of our processed foods. These foods have never been tested for long-term safety, nor are they labeled. All over the world government leaders, scientists, food industry members, and consumers are urging the United States to exercise caution in the use of this technology. To date, we have chosen to ignore their pleas. Instead, our own high-ranking officials and biotech industry representatives have attempted to force these countries to bend to the corporate will of the United States with threats of trade fines, and WTO review.

I find it indefensible that my government refuses to allow other nations the right to choose not to import genetically engineered foods. As a country that stands up for human rights around the world, we must support the right of people everywhere to vote ?No? on this issue. As it stands, our behavior casts a terrible shadow of doubt over our commitment to democracy, and brings shame to our nation.

Genetically engineered foods are experimental. Many reputable scientists and physicians, both in the U.S. and abroad, consider them to be potentially hazardous to our health and ecosystem. I do NOT want to eat them. Furthermore I do NOT want to feed them to my children. It is unconscionable that my government refuses to support my right to proper safety testing, thorough and appropriate risk assessment protocols, and truthful labeling.

My family is caught in the middle of an international debate. The people I love have been turned into guinea pigs in the largest food experiment of all time. The United States government's unilateral claim that GE foods are safe lacks scientific merit. It is clear that our choice to support genetic engineering is, at this time, ethically questionable. So, please don't send me a form letter stating that the FDA believes they are safe. It simply will not do.

As an American, I ask that the Clinton administration:
#61623; Return my right to make informed choices in the market place
#61623; Require the mandatory labeling of all GE foods
#61623; Establish an immediate 5-year moratorium on the release of genetically engineered organisms.

During this time I ask that you create an independent review board to:
#61623; Scientifically assess the hazards of genetically engineered organisms (GEOs) to human health and the environment;

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 Evaluate the cultural, economic and ethical impacts of the technology;
 Structure a program and set of procedures to evaluate every individual GEO before it is approved for commercial distribution on any level.

This board must have:

 Scientists and consumers, none of whom stand to benefit in any way from the promotion of this technology;
 Legal authority to prohibit the marketing, sales and planting of any and all GEOs;
 Authority to create policies for small-scale field trials of GEOs.

Mrs. Clinton, you are known throughout the nation as a woman who holds her family and the environment very close to her heart. As a Democrat, you are known for supporting the rights of the people. But you have aligned yourself with the big guys on this one and left the rest of us without protection. I urge you to remember your responsibility to the American people and serve us now. If you find the pressure from the industry too much to bear, please remember to consider the issues as a mother and safeguard the food supply to secure the genetic heritage of the earth for your children.

Sincerely,

Mari E. Guarino

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